

Dear Honorable Paul Crotty:

I am writing this letter to give you a better idea as to the type of person I am. As you know, my name is Salvatore Tagliaferro Sr.; however, that doesn't tell you anything about me other than my legal name. I am a Christian, a husband and a father as well as a confidant and supporter of my closest friends. As a Christian, I have tried to live my life in a way that embodies the belief that we should help one another without any expectation of getting anything in return for having done so. In fact, I have spent a good portion of my life trying to help people and never looking for anything in return for that help. People have asked me many times throughout my life why I choose to live my life in this way and my answer has always been the same: To show my three wonderful sons that it is better to give than to receive. I truly believe children learn by example and by what they experience. Therefore, I have always tried my best to show them that putting in a hard day's work, without any shortcuts, is the honorable, respectful and best way of life.

I humbly request your patience while I give you some additional background on my life. In 2011 I was elected President of Local 926. Although I was elected President of Local 926 (which is a non-paid position), I also still worked as a carpenter all day and conducted the Local's business before and after my working hours. During my first months in office, I reviewed the Local's expenses and found multiple ways to cut spending. My first action was to cut the dues paid by each union member knowing that we would be able to balance the books at a lower membership rate by making more prudent choices. Several months later, the District Council cut the dental and vision coverage for the membership. In response to this, I researched multiple options and found a way for the Local to pay for the coverage for our active membership at no additional expense to the members themselves. I am proud to say that Local 926 was the only carpenter local with these coverages. In addition, at the time of my election, Local 926 had total assets in the approximate amount of \$365,000 and debts totaling approximately \$81,000 to the council. When I resigned in 2019, Local 926 had over \$1.1 million in assets and zero debt. Over the years, I also led the effort to implement and create a scholarship fund for the children of our membership as well as the effort to implement and create life insurance for all our active members. Please note that this was again done without any additional cost to the membership.

Throughout this time, the district council and other local presidents complained to me and my executive board; they were under pressure from questioning by their members who wondered why Local 926 could achieve these things while their local was unable to do so. There was an easy answer to this question: My board and I didn't take the stipend to which we were entitled, because I worked to convince them it was better to help all the membership than to take a few hundred dollars each.

I spent countless hours and days serving the membership, some of whom were like family to me while some were complete strangers. Yet, I felt privileged to help each and every individual equally and proudly.

I truly believe that if a person is willing to work, they should be given a chance to explore opportunities available that they may not have previously been aware of, allowing them to potentially become productive members of society. Once again, I have always led by example, never asking for anything in return for any guidance I provided. I believed that if people saw me working with my hands as a carpenter side by side with other union carpenters, while simultaneously working as President of the Local, then they would also see the opportunities available to them!

This ordeal and standing here before you has been very difficult for me but more importantly it has been very difficult for my family, especially my children. I understand that most people erroneously think "where there is smoke there is fire"; however, I'm here today as an innocent man. While I did approve the admission of membership into the local for the members that came in, I was never aware that anyone was being charged for such admission. Instead, my job was simply to help build the membership and help people achieve a middle class position in life while never asking for or accepting anything for having done so.

Your Honor, writing this letter is very difficult for me. I never asked for recognition for helping my membership and writing this letter, outlining those things I have done to improve the membership, makes me very uncomfortable. However, I thought you should know what kind of person I am.

I am today a broken man. As a father my job is to help my boys become men; as a husband, my job is to care for and provide for my wife and family; as a Christian, my responsibility is to help my neighbors and friends. I assure you that I have tried my best to be that person and would greatly appreciate the

opportunity to continue to do so without interruption.

I plead with you for mercy, not just for me but also for my 21 year old son, Chris, who is autistic. Chris is not here with me because I haven't been able to muster up the courage to tell him in particular what has been going on. He and I are best friends; he is my everything and I am his everything. He is the first person I see every morning and the last person I see every night. My son Chris was 4 years old before he said his first word. At 4.5 years old, he said he wanted to be a paleontologist and in fact he just started his third year of college (although, due to the pandemic, his classes are mostly online which is extremely difficult for an average person but even more so for an autistic person). I'm proud to say Chris tries his best and I try my best to help him in every way I can. Unfortunately, his schoolwork is far above my intellect, so I struggle to find him tutoring for each of his subjects. My wife spent the first 7 years of Chris's life taking him to school and therapist 6 days a week. We have been trying our best to help him become a self-sufficient person; however, he isn't there yet. Again, I plead for your mercy because although my son has achieved many things, the road ahead of him is still very uncertain and we would be forever grateful if I were able to be remain part of his life on an everyday basis.

Thank you for your time, patience and consideration in connection with this matter.

Sincerely,  
Salvatore Tagliaferro